**Note: Currently at 4 ½ pages, page goal is 3 to 4**

**Standard Four: The Academic Program**

4.1) Consistent with its Mission of broadly educating students, Central offers a generous array of undergraduate and graduate level degree and certificate programs, through on ground and online modalities. The programs include three undergraduate certificate programs requiring 12 to 15 credits, 65 baccalaureate programs, 31 official certificate program (post-baccalaureate), 39 master’s degrees, five post-master’s/six-year certificates, and two doctorates. Collectively, the 145 programs cover 100 different recognized subject areas (CIP codes). (4.3 & 4.4) Academic programs reflect the depth and breadth of faculty knowledge, expertise and creativity, and student achievement is regularly measured to ensure the quality and integrity of CCSU’s offerings. The quality of Central’s programs are validated by external discipline-specific accrediting bodies (4.2) Every academic program has its own set of [webpages](https://www2.ccsu.edu/program/) where future and current students can view a brief description of the program and its attributes, the curriculum, degree/certificate requirements, learning outcomes, and faculty associated with the program. Historical information regarding curriculum and program requirements can be found in the [Undergraduate/Graduate Catalog](http://ccsu.smartcatalogiq.com/current/Undergraduate-Graduate-Catalog); catalogs going back to 1990-91 are made available on the website.

**Assuring Academic Quality**

(4.5 & 4.6) The University maintains an effective system of academic oversight, grounded in shared governance, that assures the quality of its academic programs. Every program is required to report on the assessment of student learning in an annual assessment report, submitted to the Faculty-led AAC; in 2022-23, CCSU had a 97 percent compliance rate. In concert with this process, the University formally conducts an external review of all of its academic programs either through the [APR](https://docs.ccsu.edu/oira/assessment/Academic_Program_Review_Policy_Statement.pdf) process for non-accredited programs or via a discipline-specific, national accrediting body for the 70 programs that are externally accredited (see Standard Two). OIRA supports the AAC and coordinates the APR process.

(4.7) The University’s [SP2030](https://www.ccsu.edu/strategicplan/), faculty expertise, and the aspirations of its students guide academic planning. Significant changes to existing or creation of new undergraduate and graduate programs are subject to a rigorous review process. They are initiated by the faculty and approved by shared governance committees (e.g., the University Curriculum Committee, the Academic Standards Committee, the Faculty Senate, the UPBC and the IPC), the administration, and finally the Board of Regents (BOR). Proposals submitted to the BOR include extensive information on budgets, resource requirements, and the workforce needs of Connecticut. (4.9) When academic programs are deleted or undergo significant changes in requirements, students have the opportunity to complete the program or transfer to a different program. The BOR also requires a teach-out process that lasts two to four years. (4.10) The University regularly secures written agreements that ensure access to resources beyond its direct control, such as hospitals, cloud services, and Blackboard Learn. (4.11) Collegiate-level competency in the English language is a requirement of all students. (4.12) In addition, CCSU’s system of academic oversight ensures that expectations for student achievement, independent learning, information literacy, skills in inquiry, and critical judgment are appropriate to the subject matter.

**Undergraduate Degree and Certificate Programs**

(4.13 & 4.19) All academic programs are based on clear and articulated learning objectives that include mastery of the content knowledge, key theories, research methodologies, and the development of best practices in the field. All programs are designed to ensure that students delve deeply into their disciplines and access coursework opportunities that range from introductory to advanced levels. All students must complete at [least 12 credits](http://ccsu.smartcatalogiq.com/current/Undergraduate-Graduate-Catalog/Undergraduate-Academic-Policies-and-Requirements/Graduation-Policies-and-Requirements/Residence-Requirements-for-Degree) in their major at the 300 level or above. Professional programs include learning experiences that facilitate the development of a professional identity and appropriate aptitude in the field. Through prerequisites, related requirements, such as field experience, capstone, etc., and learning objectives, each program is structured to build the proficiencies required for mastery of the discipline. Sequencing of course work is designed by faculty and departments routinely update academic major curricula to adapt to changing needs in the discipline and the workforce. The Senate and the Curriculum Committee establish and oversee changes of all degree requirements.

Program course requirements are available to students in the Undergraduate catalog, [Curriculum sheets](https://docs.ccsu.edu/curriculumsheets/AnthropologyBA_CurriculumSheet.pdf), and [academic maps](https://docs.ccsu.edu/academicmaps/2022/SocialWorkBA_AcademicMap.pdf); the later provides an example of how to complete their program in four years (4.13).

**Undergraduate General Education**

(4.15, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18) Central ensures academic excellence by providing a robust [General Education](http://ccsu.smartcatalogiq.com/current/Undergraduate-Graduate-Catalog/Undergraduate-General-Education-Program) (GenEd) program that requires 44-46 credits across traditional areas of study (arts and humanities, social and behavioral sciences, and natural sciences) and essential academic and life skills (written and oral communication, mathematics, foreign language skills, and fitness/wellness). The 10 GenEd learning outcomes (LO) include quantitative reasoning (QR), critical thinking (CT), information literacy (IL), scientific reasoning (SR), historical understanding (HU), aesthetic knowledge (AK), ethical dimensions (ED), and social phenomena (community engagement, CE). Additionally, graduates must also demonstrate proficiency in English when communicating orally (OC) or in a written format (WC). Finally, students must satisfy a foreign language proficiency requirement (if not already done in high school) and take courses that 1) incorporate an international component, and 2) emphasize equity, justice, and inclusion.

(4.15) With approval from the [Faculty Senate](https://web.ccsu.edu/facultysenate/minutes1718nov13.asp), Central continues its effective GenEd assessment model that uses rubric-aligned artifacts from freshmen and senior level students. The authentic student work is then assessed by faculty who have been trained to assess work specific to the LO and rubric. In 2021, CCSU was awarded a $150,000 grant from the Davis Educational Foundation (DEF) with the goals of 1) expanding its assessment of GenEd from five LOs to all 10 LOs; 2) developing faculty approved rubrics for the remaining five LOs; 3) increasing the number of assignments aligned to each of the 10 GenEd rubrics; and 4) assessing artifacts for each LO. As of spring 2023, nine of the 10 LO have been assessed (see Standard 8 for more information).

**Graduate Degree Programs**

(4.20, 4.21) CCSU offers an array of graduate programs. As previously stated, all  [programs](https://www2.ccsu.edu/program/) have a program-specific website that provides essential information to prospective and current students. The curriculum for each program extends the depth and sophistication of material covered at the baccalaureate level; establishing a strong foundation in discipline-specific methods and core competencies before progressing to more complex and detailed forms of knowledge and practice. Additionally, graduate programs require greater access to specialized journals, databases, and other technical, scholarly materials. No more than nine credits of 400-level undergraduate course work can count toward the graduate degree, and these courses must provide a syllabus distinctly more advanced from the undergraduate course. Changes to graduate programs require an additional level of review which includes the Graduate Studies Curriculum Subcommittee and the full Graduate Studies Committee.

In 2019 the [Accelerate Central](https://web.ccsu.edu/facultySenate/files/Supporting_Documents_2019-20/Accelerate%20Central%202020.pdf) program framework was adopted; essentially students earn a bachelor’s and master’s degree in five years instead of six. These 3+2 programs allow students to include 12-16 credits of graduate coursework (400 and 500 level) in their senior year. This ability to count up to eight credits for both the bachelor’s and master’s degrees makes it attractive to students pursuing advanced education. To be eligible, undergraduates must have a minimum 3.30 GPA. If accepted, they officially matriculate into the master’s program immediately upon conferral of the bachelor’s degree.

(4.22) Faculty teaching graduate level courses must possess an appropriate terminal degree. A strict review process for exceptions requires faculty with specialized expertise to be vetted by the department chair, dean, provost, and Human Resources. Central does not otherwise distinguish between graduate and undergraduate Faculty. Research and creative activity are requirements of the CBA and included in the pre-and post-tenure review process. All Faculty, regardless of affiliation with undergraduate or graduate programs, have research-relevant or practice-relevant expertise.

4.23) The Graduate Studies Policy Subcommittee reviews and approves admission criteria; individual departments and programs may have additional admission criteria appropriate to the field. Graduate Admissions, reviews applications, and ensures admitted students are qualified for advanced academic study. Almost 75 percent of graduate students are enrolled part-time and complete their degree or certificate in 2.5 to 2.8 years with 73-79 percent graduating in a timely manner (see Data Form 8.X).

(4.24, 4.25, 4.26, 4.27, 4.28) All of Central’s graduate programs include primary study in research methods, theory, and/or application with sequenced curriculum that emphasizes the various program components and outcomes, appropriate for each level. The curriculum prepares students for individual field-experiences such as internships, student teaching, practicums, clinical service, and research. CCSU’s graduate students demonstrate mastery of their discipline through required capstone experiences such as a thesis, a comprehensive exam, or a special project and is carefully integrated into the research- or practice-based curriculum. Doctoral programs require additional coursework, field experience, and scholarship beyond what is expected of master’s students and candidates complete a comprehensive assessment prior to beginning their dissertation/scholarly project.

**Transfer Credit** & **Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit**

4.29, 4.30) Faculty and administration are responsible for development and oversight of all policies regarding the award of academic credit. The University Curriculum Committee, Senate, academic deans, Provost and the President must approve all policies regarding the award of credit. The [Transfer Admissions](https://www2.ccsu.edu/admission/transfer/?redirected) website has policies and procedures for accepting transfer credits, a list of institutions Central has [articulations agreements](https://www2.ccsu.edu/admission/transfer/articulationagreements) with, and a comprehensive [transfer database](https://webapps.ccsu.edu/CTAB/CCSU_TransCourses.aspx). The public-facing database lists the equivalencies for the top 24 feeder institutions. In all cases, course evaluation is conducted by CCSU faculty using course description and/or syllabi to determine the appropriate equivalency. Using the transfer database, the Office of Recruitment and Admissions posts the transfer credits to the student’s record and a secondary evaluation is completed by professional advisors in consultation with program faculty to ensure proper alignment between transfer courses and the appropriate CCSU equivalent.

4.31, 4.32, 4.40) One way Central ensures the integrity of its degree programs is by adhering to the [residency requirement](http://ccsu.smartcatalogiq.com/current/Undergraduate-Graduate-Catalog/Undergraduate-Academic-Policies-and-Requirements/Graduation-Policies-and-Requirements/Residence-Requirements-for-Degree) which requires all undergraduate students to complete a minimum of 30 credits (or 25 percent of the program) at CCSU, which includes a minimum of 15 credits in the major and 9 credits within the minor. Graduate students may transfer in no more than nine credits for programs requiring 30-35 credits, or 25% of the total credits for programs requiring 36 credits or more. In addition to these requirements, all programs are assessed on a regular cycle, as described in the Reflective Essay (Standard Eight). (4.33, 4.35) Of the 65 baccalaureate programs, only six engineering/technology programs require more than 120 credits. These programs are externally accredited, require between 125 and 130 credits, and as per BOR policy, they received an exemption. Credits beyond those required for the major, minor, and GenEd are left to the discretion of the student as free electives, in consultation with his or her advisor. The number of free electives varies depending on program size and requirements; some accredited programs mandate specific coursework limiting student choice for electives. (4.34) Central does not offer competency-based programs.

(4.36 - 4.41) Faculty and administration are responsible for development and oversight of all policies regarding the award of academic credit. The Senate maintains decision-making authority in matters related to curriculum, degree requirements, and scholastic standards. The Curriculum Committee considers proposals related to curriculum change through a clear and thorough review process which includes a detailed description of course content. The academic deans, Provost and the President must approve all policies regarding the award of credit. In cases of dual enrollment, CCSU faculty are responsible for course content, design, and evaluation. Central does not evaluate or give credit for prior learning but will accept such credits transferred from other accredited institutions. Credit towards graduation is also not awarded for pre-collegiate-level or developmental work designed as preparation for collegiate work. In addition, the evaluation of student learning is covered by the Academic Assessment Policy as discussed in Standard Eight. Ensuring a quality education is also the responsibility of the student, and as such they are expected to invest in course-related work with a [minimum](http://ccsu.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/Undergraduate-Graduate-Catalog/Graduate-Academic-Policies-and-Requirements/Time-Expectations-for-Graduate-Student-Course-Equivalent-Work) of two hours of out-of-class work per each hour of in-class instruction.

4.42, 4.43, 4.44) Central has clear [standards and policies](https://www.ccsu.edu/registrar/policies.html) for graduation, retention, probation, dismissal, grading standards, and re-admission. These can all be found on the Registrar’s and Admissions websites and in the Undergraduate/Graduate Catalog. Additional policies are also provided in program-specific handbooks ([Nursing](https://www.ccsu.edu/nursing/), [Social Work](https://www.ccsu.edu/socialwork/), etc.) that are available in both digitally and hardcopy. To ensure academic integrity, there are policies and procedures to deal with academic misconduct where Faculty have the authority in levying sanctions.

4.45, 4.46) Most courses are offered in traditional 15-week semesters. Some courses are offered in abbreviated time periods, such as summer and winter sessions but meet for the same number of contact hours as 15-week courses, regardless of modality. Academic Affairs oversees courses offered during abbreviated time periods and ensures that faculty contact hours are consistent with courses held during the traditional semester. Faculty who teach in a non-traditional modality are supported by the CTI. 4.48) Student access to online content is achieved through a secure login and passcode. Additionally, the University uses multifactor authentication at random intervals to ensure student identity. Regardless of modality or timeframe of a course, faculty are expected to maintain consistent standards and course content. In 2021, an analysis comparing course grade point averages by modality demonstrated no difference in student achievement nor was there a pattern favoring one modality over another. 4.47) To further support students, Faculty are required (per the CBA) to hold office hours totaling at least five hours per week. Since the pandemic, the addition of virtual office hours has created more convenience for students both on campus and online. Also, in response to the pandemic, the Learning Center has introduced online tutoring services across a variety of subjects.

4.49) Lastly, CCSU offers certificate programs with approval through the standard curriculum process. All certificate programs are comprised of courses that can be used to satisfy requirements in other degree programs at either the undergraduate or graduate level. The academic quality of these programs is monitored through the work of the Academic Assessment Committee.