

# **College and Career Compass**

# **Institutional Self-Assessment**

## Institutional Self-Assessment

The purpose of the Compass Institutional Self-Assessment is to develop strategies that support adult learners. WSAC developed the Self-Assessment after conducting a literature review and discussions with leadership from several Washington institutions.

The Washington Student Achievement Council will use the Self-Assessment results to:

* Create an inventory of existing policies and practices at participating campuses.
* Facilitate future learning exchanges among participating institutions.
* Identify best practices for support and expansion.

We recognize that campuses will vary in the depth and breadth of adult learner-focused practices and responses from the Self-Assessment. WSAC will only share responses in aggregate, unless authorized by the campus leadership contact.

### Submit the Self-Assessment online

To prepare for submission, we suggest that a cross-division campus team review the following worksheets to examine and reflect on how your campus meets the needs of adult learners. Then, submit your responses online in Survey 1: Institutional Self-Assessment and Student Response Plan: <https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/5358857/Compass-Institutional-Self-Assessment-and-Response-Plan>

The Self-Assessment includes institutional strategies to support adult learners in five focus areas:

1. Admissions and enrollment
2. Academic programs
3. Affordability
4. Student supports
5. Planning and evaluation

**For each institutional strategy listed,** indicate whether your campus offers that type of support. If yes, provide a description and web link.

**For each focus area**, share reflections of your institution’s strengths and challenges related to each focus area for adult learners, as well as any areas of planned research or changes.

**The Self-Assessment worksheets include all of the questions in the online Self-Assessment part of Survey 1.**

## Worksheet for Focus Area 1: Admissions and Enrollment

### Adult Learner Needs

* Clear information regarding admissions policies for returning students.
* Readily available information regarding program delivery, time-to-completion.
* Support to address issues from past enrollment.

### Institutional Strategies

* Readily available admissions information about requirements for returning, transfer, and adult students, including cumulative GPA, assessment, and other requirements.
* A policy on fees or holds from prior enrollment with your institution.
* A preliminary review of transcripts to provide early time-to-completion information.
* Policy for reenrolling students who have past issues with your institution related to grades or Satisfactory Academic Progress.
* Recruitment materials, imagery and resource information that target adult learners.
* Other strategies for admissions and enrollment that are supportive of adult learners’ needs.

### Reflection

1. Describe your institution’s current strengths in serving adult learners in this focus area, including any subpopulations (ex. Veterans, parents, etc.).
2. Describe any challenges or gaps in serving adult learners in this focus area.
3. Describe any areas of planned research or development for the next year in this focus area.

## Worksheet for Focus Area 2: Educational Programs

### Adult Learner Needs

* Balance work and family schedule
* Efficient time-to-completion plan
* Credit for prior learning

### Institutional Strategies

* Flexible program delivery and course scheduling options (ex. Online/hybrid programs; evening and/or weekend classes; predictable schedule through length of program).
* Partnerships with employers or workforce agencies to increase flexibility and access to educational programs (ex. Workplace-based classes or cohorts, employer training crosswalks for academic credit)
* Transparent and accessible transfer policies with staff support.
* Readily available information and advising on academic credit for prior learning policies and procedures.
* Accelerated program options.
* Program options designed to facilitate degree completion for transferring adults, with fewer degree-specific required classes (ex. General studies or “completion degrees.”)
* Stackable or latticed career pathway options within your institution or in partnership with other institutions.
* Other educational program strategies supportive of adult learner needs?

### Reflection

* Describe your institution’s current strengths in serving adult learners in this focus area.
* Describe any challenges or gaps in serving adult learners in this focus area.
* Describe any areas of planned research or development for the next year in this focus area.

## Worksheet for Focus Area 3: Affordability

### Adult Learner Needs

* Navigate financial assistance
* Address past financial aid issues
* Coordinated support across programs
* Support with unexpected expenses

### Institutional Strategies

* Adult-focused promotion and/or completion support of FAFSA/WASFA.
* Promotion of financial aid reevaluation opportunity if students have recently become unemployed, independent, homeless, etc.
* Funding set-aside for late applicants or mid-year admits.
* Institutional aid or scholarships focused on adult learners or transfer students (ex. "finish line" scholarships or prioritizing aid to students close to completion).
* Loan counseling targeted to former borrowers.
* Promotion and assistance with the financial aid reinstatement appeal process.
* Advising and support for those with financial aid repayments or defaults.
* Promotion and coordination of funding options or other financial benefits (i.e. workforce programs, public benefits, etc.).
* Childcare cost supports.
* Food insecurity supports or partnerships.
* Housing insecurity or homelessness supports or partnerships.
* Low-barrier emergency funds for adult students facing unexpected financial issues.
* Adult-appropriate financial coaching or similar resources.
* Other affordability strategies that are supportive of adult learners’ needs?

### Reflection

* Describe your institution’s current strengths in serving adult learners in this focus area.
* Describe any challenges or gaps in serving adult learners in this focus area.
* Describe any areas of planned research or development for the next year in this focus area.

## Worksheet for Focus Area 4: Student Supports

### Adult Learner Needs

* Help with navigating college
* Flexible support service schedules
* Career development
* Sense of belonging

### Institutional Strategies

* Adult-appropriate orientation for newly admitted students.
* Flexible schedules for in-person advising, tutoring, success coaching, career and other support services.
* Online options for advising, tutoring, career and other support services.
* Partnership with employers and community organizations to create and improve career development and opportunities for adult learners.
* On-campus childcare or strong partnership with childcare providers for access and availability.
* Adult learner-focused peer support opportunities.
* Adult learner-focused organizations or activities.
* Other strategies that provide support for adult learners’ needs?

### Reflection

* Describe your institution’s current strengths in supporting adult learners.
* Describe any challenges or gaps in providing support for adult learners.
* Describe any areas of planned research or development planned for the next year in supports for adult learners.

## Worksheet for Focus Area 5: Planning and Evaluation

### Key Practices

* Planning includes adult learners
* Policies and practices are evaluated

### Institutional Strategies

* Disaggregated data collection and analysis on adult learners to guide decision-making.
* Intentional use of an equity lens to identify any opportunity gaps in policies/programs/services for adult learners.
* Engagement of adult learner leaders in planning and evaluation.
* College-wide strategies designed to increase enrollment, persistence and graduation of adult learners.
* Progress and improvements in serving adult learners reported to stakeholders (board of trustees, accreditors, etc.).
* Other evaluation or strategic development efforts that are supportive of adult learners?

### Reflection

* Describe your institution’s current strengths in adult learner-focused planning and evaluation.
* Describe any challenges or gaps in strategic planning and evaluation focused on adult learners.
* Describe any areas of planned research, strategic planning and evaluation focused on adult learners in the next year.