

# Academic Rigor Statement

This statement clarifies the attributes of a rigorous curriculum at Mountwest and defines the traits of corequisite courses, 100-level courses, and 200-level courses.

The purpose of this statement is to:

1. Ensure consistency of rigor across the curriculum, both in General Education courses and programmatic courses.
2. Create transparency for students, so that they are aware of the expectations of courses regardless of the level of learning.

By doing so, it is our belief that students will be better able to: achieve course and program-level outcomes, become lifelong learners, and meet the demands of the workplace after completion of a degree.

## Traits of a Rigorous Curriculum at Mountwest

(C.H.A.S.E.)

### Challenging Content

When appropriate, coursework should emphasize analysis, evaluation, application, and synthesis, including applying knowledge between different courses and disciplines.

### Higher-Order Thinking

Learning outcomes for a course express demonstrable goals appropriate to the course level and use verbs from the corresponding level of Bloom's Taxonomy, while operating within the constraints of the discipline.

### Active Learning

To the extent that it is appropriate to the discipline, students are actively involved in the learning process. Instead of simply receiving information, as in a teacher-centered model, students will instead work to apply what is being taught and assume a participatory role, both in and out of the classroom.

### Sufficient Academic Support

Learners must be provided with adequate additional support outside of the classroom to help them achieve learning goals and comprehend course material. This is a college-wide effort and will be achieved by (1) Student Success Counselors placing students in courses that are at an appropriate level and delivered via the appropriate modality; (2) both counselors and instructors referring students to support services as needed; (3) instructors and counselors using early intervention software to

Updated & Approved: December 1, 2021

Effective: December 1, 2021

communicate about students' needs; and (4) learners are expected to utilize the Academic Support Services available on campus and/or virtually when needed.

#### Expectations That Are Clearly Articulated

Students are made aware of the expectations of a particular course by way of information in the syllabus and within assignment instructions. Instructors strive to be as transparent as possible regarding the expectations of their courses, assignments, and the manner in which they assign grades.

#### Definitions of Course Levels

Corequisite Courses – These courses' numeric designators begin with "0." Corequisite courses equip learners with the skills necessary to successfully complete 100-level courses. Enrollment in these courses may be determined by a placement test. Corequisite courses are taken concurrently with the corresponding 100-level course to provide the additional academic support needed to complete the corresponding 100-level course successfully.

100-level Courses – These courses impart disciplinary knowledge and skills at a foundational level and are normally taken in the first year of study. To complete these courses successfully, students should possess adequate writing skills to be able to compose college-level assignments on their own or with the aid of the Writing Center. 100-level courses may require no prerequisite, or they may be taken in the same semester as a corequisite course.

200-level Courses – These are intermediate courses that expand upon introductory knowledge and skills, may require a prerequisite, and are normally taken after the first year of study. When they enter these courses, students will possess adequate skills acquired from General Education and other prerequisite courses to help them be successful. Students will be acquainted with the basic terminology or methodology of the subject of the course and will be able to accomplish a substantial amount of work at a more advanced level.