

WOMEN STUDENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES CAS STANDARDS and GUIDELINES

Part 1. MISSION

The purpose of WSPS is to promote a supportive, equitable, and safe environment for women.

Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must incorporate student learning and student development in its mission. WSPS must enhance overall educational experiences. WSPS must develop, record, disseminate, implement, and regularly review its mission and goals. Mission statements must be consistent with the mission and goals of the institution and with the standards in this document. WSPS must operate as an integral part of the institution's overall mission.

The mission is accomplished by:

- empowering students to create a campus culture that values all women and their diverse identities and experiences
- providing, coordinating, or participating in comprehensive sexual violence risk reduction programs and services for survivors of sexual violence
- educating all students on the ways in which gender is constructed and shapes social structures and individual experiences
- assessing the climate for women and advocating for the diverse needs of women
- providing information and referrals about issues that disproportionately affect women, such as sexual harassment, relationship violence, rape, and disordered eating
- sponsoring speakers, performers, events, and activities that address gender issues
- creating opportunities for women's voices to be heard

Part 2. PROGRAM

The formal education of students consists of the curriculum and the co-curriculum, and must promote student learning and development that is purposeful and holistic. Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes and provide programs and services that encourage the achievement of those outcomes.

Relevant and desirable outcomes include: intellectual growth, effective communication, realistic self-appraisal, enhanced self-esteem, clarified values, career choices, leadership development, healthy behaviors, meaningful interpersonal relationships, independence, collaboration, social responsibility,

satisfying and productive lifestyles, appreciation of diversity, spiritual awareness, and achievement of personal and educational goals.

WSPS must provide evidence of its impact on the achievement of student learning and development outcomes.

The table below offers examples of evidence of achievement of student learning and development.

Desirable Student Learning and Development Outcomes:	Examples of Achievement
Intellectual growth	Understands the intersection of gender with race, class, sexual orientation and other identity formations; Explains how feminist, womanist, and other gendered theories inform practice and vice versa; Employs critical thinking in problem solving; Integrates complex information from a variety of sources including personal experience to form a decision or opinion; Expresses an appreciation for how gender informs the production of knowledge and the experience of learning
Effective communication	Expresses oneself and influences others through writing, speaking, and/or artistic expression
Enhanced self-esteem	Shows respect for self and others; Demonstrates willingness to address challenges and pursue opportunities; Communicates values, needs, and boundaries effectively
Realistic self-appraisal	Explores how societal expectations may inform one's self-appraisal; Recognizes personal strengths and challenges; Considers feedback from others; Learns from past experiences
Clarified values	Understands influence of societal norms on the construction of personal values; Demonstrates willingness to examine personal beliefs and values and how they influence behavior
Career choices	Evaluates workplaces and policies as they relate to gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and ability; Understands how these factors affect the intersection of career choice, personal and professional goals, and the world of work; Develops a vision for professional growth congruent with one's passions, values, and skills
Leadership development	Demonstrates initiative, vision, and perseverance; Comprehends group dynamics; Exerts positive influence to create desired outcomes
Healthy behavior	Learns about and uses effective self-care strategies; Articulates the relationship between health and wellness and accomplishing life long goals; Chooses behaviors and environments that promote health and reduce risk

Meaningful interpersonal relationships	Develops and maintains interpersonal relationships with others based on respect; Appreciates differences by listening to and considering others' points of view
Independence	Exhibits self-reliant behaviors; Functions autonomously; Exhibits ability to function interdependently
Collaboration	Develops relationships that lead toward achievement of goals; Seeks wide involvement of others; Demonstrates an openness to feedback
Social responsibility	Appropriately challenges the unfair, unjust, or uncivil behavior of other individuals or groups; Participates in community service activities
Satisfying and productive lifestyles	Articulates long-term personal and professional goals and objectives based on personal identity, ethical, spiritual, and moral values
Appreciating diversity	Seeks to understand one's own multifaceted identity; Seeks involvement with people different from oneself; Articulates the advantages and challenges of a diverse society; Appropriately challenges stereotypes; Understands the impact of diversity on one's own society
Spiritual awareness	Develops and articulates a personal belief system; Understands role of spirituality in personal and group values and behaviors
Personal and educational goals	Articulates and pursues goals and objectives; Uses goals to guide decisions; Assesses and revises goals periodically; Understands the effect of one's personal and educational goals on others

WSPS must be (a) intentional, (b) coherent, (c) based on theories and knowledge of learning and human development, (d) reflective of developmental and demographic profiles of the student population, and (e) responsive to needs of individuals, unique populations, and communities.

WSPS staff must address the needs of undergraduate and graduate women students by incorporating the dimensions of ethnicity, race, religion, ability, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, and other aspects of identity through programs and services. WSPS must promote unrestricted access for full involvement of women in all aspects of the collegiate experience.

WSPS must provide programs and services that address institutional environment, social justice, campus support services, networking opportunities, and other educational issues of significance to women.

WSPS may address issues of equity for staff members, faculty members, and women in the surrounding community.

To address the institutional environment, WSPS must:

- **advocate for a campus culture that eliminates barriers, prejudice, bigotry, and creates a hospitable climate for all women**
- **assess and monitor the campus climate for women in areas of sexual harassment and sexual violence, and collaborate with on- and off-campus partners to create institutional policies, education, and programs to work toward the elimination of violence against women**
- **advocate for assessment of the campus environment for the presence of gender bias in areas including but not limited to employment, educational opportunities, and classroom climate**
- **advocate for the elimination of institutional policies and practices that result in an inequitable impact on women as students or employees**
- **promote awareness in ways in which gender bias intersects with racism, classism, and homophobia**
- **serve as a resource in helping campus constituencies identify and create equitable practices**

WSPS must advance social justice through opportunities for involvement in global, national, state, provincial, and local action initiatives related to improving women's lives.

WSPS should provide models of non-hierarchical and collaborative leadership.

WSPS should provide social activism opportunities that allow for the integration of theory with practice.

WSPS must address the provision of campus support services including:

- **advocacy, resources, and referrals related to sexual assault, sexual harassment, cyber-harassment, stalking, and relationship violence**
- **academic support that addresses concerns such as flexible scheduling, the environment for women students in traditionally male-dominated disciplines, and gender equity in the classroom**
- **resources and referrals for prevention, counseling, medical services, healthcare, disordered eating, physical and mental health, and equitable access to wellness, fitness, and health services**
- **resources and referrals for underrepresented or underserved communities**
- **the need for adequate, accessible, affordable, and flexible child and family care**

WSPS must facilitate networking opportunities that:

- **create support systems and communication networks for women students**
- **identify role models by recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of women on and off campus**
- **encourage liaisons between global, national, state, provincial, and local women's organizations and campus-based women student programs and services**

WSPS must provide educational programs that promote awareness of the way in which gender is constructed and shapes social structures and individual experiences. WSPS must offer experiential opportunities that explore oppression, privilege, and racism to increase students' understanding of the intersections of sexism with racism, classism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression.

WSPS should support the promotion of scholarship and research on women and gender in collaboration with a women studies program, if available, as well as with other departments.

Educational programs should focus on women's physical and mental health, personal safety, sexual assault and relationship violence, healthy relationships, leadership, spirituality, current events, and global issues.

WSPS should provide service learning and internship opportunities.

WSPS should advocate curricular change to include women's issues and contribution to society.

Part 3. LEADERSHIP

Effective and ethical leadership is essential to the success of all organizations. Institutions must appoint, position, and empower Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) leaders within the administrative structure to accomplish stated missions. WSPS leaders at various levels must be selected on the basis of formal education and training, relevant work experience, personal skills and competencies, relevant professional credentials, as well as potential for promoting learning and development in students, applying effective practices to educational processes, and enhancing institutional effectiveness. Institutions must determine expectations of accountability for leaders and fairly assess their performance.

Leaders of WSPS must exercise authority over resources for which they are responsible to achieve their respective missions.

WSPS leaders must:

- **articulate a vision for their organization**
- **set goals and objectives based on the needs and capabilities of the population served**
- **promote student learning and development**
- **prescribe and practice ethical behavior**
- **recruit, select, supervise, and develop others in the organization**
- **manage financial resources**
- **coordinate human resources**

- **plan, budget for, and evaluate personnel and programs**
- **apply effective practices to educational and administrative processes**
- **communicate effectively**
- **initiate collaborative interaction between individuals and agencies that possess legitimate concerns and interests in the functional area**

WSPS leaders must identify and find means to address individual, organizational, or environmental conditions that inhibit goal achievement. WSPS leaders must promote campus environments that result in multiple opportunities for student learning and development.

WSPS leaders must continuously improve programs and services in response to changing needs of students and other constituents, and evolving institutional priorities.

Part 4. ORGANIZATION and MANAGEMENT

Guided by an overarching intent to ensure student learning and development, Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must be structured purposefully and managed effectively to achieve stated goals. Evidence of appropriate structure must include current and accessible policies and procedures, written performance expectations for all employees, functional workflow graphics or organizational charts, and clearly stated service delivery expectations.

Evidence of effective management must include use of comprehensive and accurate information for decisions, clear sources and channels of authority, effective communication practices, decision-making and conflict resolution procedures, responsiveness to changing conditions, accountability and evaluation systems, and recognition and reward processes. WSPS must provide channels within the organization for regular review of administrative policies and procedures.

In response to the assessed needs of women students, WSPS must play a principal role in creating and implementing institutional policies and programs developed.

In the case of student-run women's programs, student leaders should have access to policy and decision makers of the institution.

Emphasis should be placed on achieving an organizational placement so that activities of WSPS are not limited to a specific group of women students (e.g., solely undergraduate women) or specific service (e.g., solely counseling services).

WSPS should function as an autonomous unit rather than be housed as a component of other units on campus.

Individual units should be afforded the opportunity to organize in a manner that is efficient and best promotes equity.

Part 5. HUMAN RESOURCES

Women Student Program and Services (WSPS) must be staffed adequately by individuals qualified to accomplish its mission and goals. Within established guidelines of the institution, WSPS must establish procedures for staff selection, training, and evaluation; set expectations for supervision, and provide appropriate professional development opportunities. WSPS must strive to improve the professional competence and skills of all personnel it employs.

WSPS should be staffed by persons with the credentials and ability to forge gender equity on campus to promote the integrity of the unit.

Staff positions must be classified and compensated on a level commensurate with equivalent positions in other units.

WSPS professional staff members must hold an earned graduate degree in a field relevant to the position they hold or must possess an appropriate combination of educational credentials and related work experience.

The leadership must have knowledge of and preferably experience with gender issues and their impact on learning and development

The professional staff should possess the academic preparation, experience, professional interests, and competencies essential for the efficient operation of the office as charged, as well as the ability to identify additional areas of concern for women. Staff members should have coursework in women's studies or demonstrated experience in advocacy on women's issues. Specific coursework may include organization development, counseling theory and practice, group dynamics, leadership development, human development, and research and evaluation.

Professional staff should demonstrate a commitment to improving women's lives and a respect for the diversity of women's identities and experiences.

Professional staff should: (a) develop and implement programs and services; (b) conduct assessment, research, and evaluation; (c) advocate for the improvement of the quality of life for women as students, faculty members, and staff members; and (d) participate in institutional policy and governance efforts to ensure that policies and practices take into account the unique experiences of women.

Degree or credential-seeking interns must be qualified by enrollment in an appropriate field of study and by relevant experience. These individuals must

be trained and supervised adequately by professional staff members holding educational credentials and related work experience appropriate for supervision.

Student employees and volunteers must be carefully selected, trained, supervised, and evaluated. They must be trained on how and when to refer those in need of assistance to qualified staff members and have access to a supervisor for assistance in making these judgments. Student employees and volunteers must be provided clear and precise job descriptions, pre-service training based on assessed needs, and continuing staff development.

WSPS should provide student staff with training and development that fosters an understanding of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and other identity formations. Wherever possible, efforts should be made to ensure that student staff reflects the diversity of women students.

WSPS must have technical and support staff members adequate to accomplish its mission. Staff members must be technologically proficient and qualified to perform their job functions, be knowledgeable of ethical and legal uses of technology, and have access to training. The level of staffing and workloads must be adequate and appropriate for program and service demands.

Technical and support staff should be sufficient to perform office and administrative functions, including welcoming, sharing resources, problem identification, and referral. In the selection and training of technical and support staff members, special emphasis should be placed on skills in the areas of crisis response and management, public relations, information dissemination, problem identification, and referral. A thorough knowledge of the institution, its various offices, and relevant community resources is important.

Salary levels and fringe benefits for all WSPS staff members must be commensurate with those for comparable positions within the institution, in similar institutions, and in the relevant geographic area.

WSPS must institute hiring and promotion practices that are fair, inclusive, and non-discriminatory. WSPS must employ a diverse staff to provide readily identifiable role models for students and to enrich the campus community.

WSPS must create and maintain position descriptions for all staff members and provide regular performance planning and appraisals.

WSPS must have a system for regular staff evaluation and must provide access to continuing education and professional development opportunities, including in-service training programs and participation in professional conferences and workshops.

To remain current and effective in understanding and addressing needs of women students staff members should be encouraged to enroll in credit courses and seminars, and be given access to published research, opinion, and relevant other media.

Part 6. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must have adequate funding to accomplish its mission and goals. Funding priorities must be determined within the context of the stated mission, goals, objectives, and comprehensive analysis of the needs and capabilities of students, and the availability of internal or external resources.

WSPS must demonstrate fiscal responsibility and cost effectiveness consistent with institutional protocols.

Although initial funding for WSPS may come from a combination of institutional funds, grant money, student government funds, fees for services, and government contracts, permanent institutional funding should be allocated for the continuing operation of WSPS.

Part 7. FACILITIES, TECHNOLOGY, and EQUIPMENT

Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must have adequate, suitably located facilities, adequate technology, and equipment to support its mission and goals efficiently and effectively. Facilities, technology, and equipment must be evaluated regularly and be in compliance with relevant federal, state, provincial, and local requirements to provide for access, health, safety, and security.

Technology and equipment must be updated regularly. In addition, support for technology must be provided to WSPS.

Facilities may be located in prominent, visible areas to visually demonstrate the institution's commitment to WSPS. Facilities should include private meeting areas and welcoming communal space. Facilities should be staffed beyond traditional business hours to ensure access for non-traditional students and other community members.

Part 8. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) staff members must be knowledgeable about and responsive to laws and regulations that relate to their respective responsibilities. WSPS staff members must inform users of programs and services and officials, as appropriate, of legal obligations and limitations including constitutional, statutory, regulatory, and case law; mandatory laws and orders emanating from federal, state, provincial, and local governments; and the institution's policies.

WSPS staff members must use reasonable and informed practices to limit the liability exposure of the institution, its officers, employees, and agents. Staff members must be informed about institutional policies regarding personal liability and related insurance coverage options.

The institution must provide access to legal advice for WSPS staff members as needed to carry out assigned responsibilities.

The institution must inform WSPS staff and students in a timely and systematic fashion about extraordinary or changing legal obligations and potential liabilities.

WSPS should serve as a resource to individuals and the institution on legal issues, institutional policy, state/provincial, and federal laws related to FERPA, or Canadian Freedom Of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP), the Clery Act (the Campus Security Act), sexual harassment and discrimination, Title IX, and the rights and responsibilities associated with confidentiality.

Part 9. EQUITY and ACCESS

Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) staff members must ensure that services and programs are provided on a fair and equitable basis. Facilities, programs and services must be accessible. Hours of operation and delivery of and access to programs and services must be responsive to the needs of all students and other constituents. WSPS must adhere to the spirit and intent of equal opportunity laws.

WSPS must be open and readily accessible to all students and must not discriminate except where sanctioned by law and institutional policy. Discrimination must be avoided on the basis of age; color; creed; cultural heritage; disability; ethnicity; gender identity; nationality; political affiliation; religious affiliation; sex; sexual orientation; or social, economic, marital, or veteran status.

Consistent with their mission and goals, WSPS must take affirmative action to remedy significant imbalances in student participation and staffing patterns.

As the demographic profiles of campuses change and new instructional delivery methods are introduced, institutions must recognize the needs of students who participate in distance learning for access to programs and services offered on campus. Institutions must provide appropriate services in ways that are accessible to distance learners and assist them in identifying and gaining access to other appropriate services in their geographic region.

Part 10. CAMPUS and EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Women student programs and services must establish, maintain, and promote effective relations with relevant individuals, campus offices, and external agencies.

WSPS should maintain good working relationships with agencies such as counseling, financial aid, clinical health services, health promotion services, career services, recreational sports, athletics, residential life, multicultural affairs, and public safety. WSPS should maintain a high degree of visibility with academic units through direct promotion and delivery of services, involvement with co-curricular programs, and staff efforts to increase understanding of the needs of women students.

Program staff should be an integral part of appropriate campus networks to participate effectively in the establishment of institution-wide policy and practices and to collaborate effectively with other staff and faculty members in providing services.

WSPS should build effective partnerships with the community to articulate common concerns and share resources.

Part 11. DIVERSITY

Within the context of each institution's unique mission, diversity enriches the community and enhances the collegiate experience for all; therefore, Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must nurture environments where commonalities and differences among people are recognized and honored.

WSPS must promote educational experiences that are characterized by open and continuous communication that deepens understanding of one's own identity, culture, and heritage, and that of others. WSPS must educate and promote respect about commonalities and differences in their historical and cultural contexts.

WSPS must address the characteristics and needs of a diverse population when establishing and implementing policies and procedures.

WSPS should be intentional about addressing race, ethnicity, class, sex, religion, sexual orientation, ability, and other aspects of identity in WSPS educational programs and services as well as in institutional policies and practices.

Part 12. ETHICS

All persons involved in the delivery of Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must adhere to the highest principles of ethical behavior. WSPS must develop or adopt and implement appropriate statements of ethical practice. WSPS must publish these statements and ensure their periodic review by relevant constituencies.

WSPS staff members must ensure that privacy and confidentiality are maintained with respect to all communications and records to the extent that such records are protected under the law and appropriate statements of ethical practice. Information contained in students' education records must not be disclosed without written consent except as allowed by relevant laws and institutional policies. Staff members must disclose to appropriate authorities information judged to be of an emergency nature, especially when the safety of the individual or others is involved, or when otherwise required by institutional policy or relevant law.

All WSPS staff members must be aware of and comply with the provisions contained in the institution's human subjects research policy and in other relevant institutional policies addressing ethical practices and confidentiality of research data concerning individuals.

WSPS staff members must recognize and avoid personal conflict of interest or appearance thereof in their transactions with students and others.

WSPS staff members must strive to ensure the fair, objective, and impartial treatment of all persons with whom they interact. Staff members must not participate in nor condone any form of harassment that demeans persons or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive campus environment.

When handling institutional funds, all WSPS staff members must ensure that such funds are managed in accordance with established and responsible accounting procedures and the fiscal policies or processes of the institution.

WSPS staff members must perform their duties within the limits of their training, expertise, and competence. When these limits are exceeded, individuals in need of further assistance must be referred to persons possessing appropriate qualifications.

WSPS staff members must use suitable means to confront and otherwise hold accountable other staff members who exhibit unethical behavior.

WSPS staff members must be knowledgeable about and practice ethical behavior in the use of technology.

Part 13. ASSESSMENT and EVALUATION

Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must conduct regular assessment and evaluations. WSPS must employ effective qualitative and quantitative methodologies as appropriate, to determine whether and to what degree the stated mission, goals, and student learning and development outcomes are being met. The process must employ sufficient and sound

assessment measures to ensure comprehensiveness. Data collected must include responses from students and other affected constituencies.

WSPS must evaluate periodically how well they complement and enhance the institution's stated mission and educational effectiveness.

A comprehensive evaluation of the ongoing program should be carried out in accordance with the general practice of program review for other units of the institution. To assist staff in planning and program formation, WSPS should establish an ongoing evaluation process..

Results of these evaluations must be used in revising and improving programs and services and in recognizing staff performance.

WSPS should inform constituencies and the institution of the results of assessment and evaluation. WSPS should engage the institution in climate-related research that addresses issues that might have a disparate effect on women.