

**Western Kentucky University (WKU):  
Application for the Kentucky Cultural Competency Credential Certification**

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**Program Overview**

The WKU Inclusive Teaching Academy (ITA), an initiative of the “*One WKU*” campaign, is a four-month professional development opportunity for all faculty ranks. Faculty from each of the five WKU colleges will be selected through a competitive application process each semester. The ITA will launch its inaugural cohort in January 2022.

The ITA was created to fulfill four interrelated functions:

- To introduce and/or deepen participants' knowledge of inclusive and culturally responsive teaching.
- To create opportunities for participants to apply evidence-based DEI principles to course design and pedagogy.
- To offer a collegial space for participants to reflect on their current and proposed teaching practices.
- To grow the community of practitioners focused on inclusivity.

The ITA is designed to develop advocates rather than experts. The academy and its architects ([the Community of Practice Fellows](#)) do not assume the role of authority on DEI issues and do not seek to train participants to become experts. Rather, the goal is to cultivate a mindset of continuous growth through praxis and reflection as a way to foster DEI advocacy at WKU.

**ITA Objectives**

Through participation in the ITA, participants will be able to more effectively:

- Support an inclusive learning environment.
- Intentionally approach difficult interactions.
- Promote the academic success of diverse students.

### **Implementation method and timeline:**

The ITA is a four-month program in which faculty meet once a week to study, reflect, discuss, and implement key principles of inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive teaching. On average, faculty will spend 2-3 hours preparing for workshops, participating in sessions, and then implementing and reflecting on the concepts introduced in each module. It is anticipated that faculty will spend approximately 32 hours on academy-related functions over the course of the program.

ITA's curriculum is composed of four key content modules:

- **Module 1:** Integrating Inclusivity into Course Set-Up
- **Module 2:** Course and Classroom Climate
- **Module 3:** Teaching with Transparency
- **Module 4:** Grading for Equity

These modules address issues related to both course design and teaching practice. Each module will take a month and is broken up into three weekly sessions that will allow for an overview, discussion, application, and reflection of each topic. Sessions will be conducted both virtually and face-to-face as well as synchronously and asynchronously. All the materials will be made available online. For a sample module, [see here](#).

### **A course outline and alignment with the A4 model:**

The modules are designed to build upon one another with attention to awareness, acknowledgment, acceptance, and action in relation to pedagogical practices. The A4 model components are introduced then reinforced throughout the program:

- **Module 1: Integrating Inclusivity into Course Set-Up**  
**Competencies addressed:** Awareness (A1); Acknowledgment (A2)

Two of the goals for this module include:

- Articulating the impact of the assumptions that underlie the faculty's teaching, classroom, and curricular goals.
- Recognizing how the instructor's culture shapes expectations of student behavior, learning, and performance in the classroom.

As a result of engaging with these goals, the academy participants will both be able to describe the value of including diverse perspectives (sources, voices, representation, subjects) in course content but also enact strategies to include diverse perspectives into the curriculum and classroom. This will allow faculty to develop courses that lead and promote justice in the classroom and beyond.

- **Module 2: Course and Classroom Climate**  
**Competencies addressed:** Acknowledgment (A2); Acceptance (A3)

This module's focus on facilitating and participating in courageous conversations with students inside and outside the classroom allows for a deeper dive into the concept of intersectionality. The very act of conducting intentionally courageous conversations leads to reflection on how our identities impact those with whom we interact and explore how identities are influenced by several cultural categories. Furthermore, because the faculty will engage in simulated scenarios of courageous and tough conversations, faculty will be

able to identify their own personal biases and how they shape their worldview while determining how to facilitate conversations that allow for opposing views that challenge one's assumptions and beliefs.

- **Module 3: Teaching with Transparency**

**Competencies addressed:** Acknowledgment (A2); Acceptance (A3)

Given that this module focuses specifically on designing assignments with transparency, it directly acknowledges the idea of a hidden curriculum. By making expectations and standards visible and legible, this module asks faculty to examine and explore their own privilege. To discuss how our identities impact those with whom we interact acknowledges faculty privilege as members of a PWI of higher education.

- **Module 4: Grading for Equity**

**Competencies addressed:** Awareness (A1); Acknowledgment (A2); Acceptance (A3); Action (A4)

By the end of the final module, the academy participant will have: examined various approaches to grading, evaluated and corrected their own impact of implicit biases on grading, and designed more equitable classroom grading strategies. Given that grading is very much conditioned by implicit bias and can, therefore, be a form of manifesting a micro-aggression that can have a long-lasting and deleterious impact on a student's academic performance, this is a module essential for the academic success of our students.

### **Tasks required of the participant**

The tasks will include the following:

- Weekly lectures
- Weekly workshops
- Syllabus reflection and revision
- Assignment reflection and revision
- Assessment procedure review and revision
- Grading policy review and revision through charrettes

### **Assessments and staffing**

The ITA will be staffed with six [WKU Community of Practice fellows](#). These six fellows are responsible for the design of the institute and all six have responsibility to conduct, facilitate, and assess the academy participants. After AY 2022/23, select ITA graduates will assume the responsibility of leading the ITA in future years.

### **Module-level assessments:**

#### **Module 1:**

The academy participants will turn in a self-reflection essay that addresses the following questions:

- Determine if there are moments where you have operated from the lens of viewing students through stereotypes and their social identities?

- Acknowledging that differing positioning confers different opportunities (i.e., different access to resources) for individuals, reflect on how your positionality (i.e., one's social position and worldview that influences how one responds to power differentials in various contexts and impacts how one approaches work with students) plays itself out in your working with students and teaching.
- What aspects of identities do you feel you need to learn about to help you create more inclusive and supportive educational experiences for your students?

The faculty will also submit a (revised) syllabus of their choosing that includes changes that reflect a curriculum which is inclusive of multiple voices and explains how they will make space for all students to share their perspectives.

### **Module 2:**

Given that the goals for the module include identifying factors that contribute to positive course climate, discussing ways to facilitate classroom discussion on challenging topics, and examining the influence of self-identity on course climate, the participants will submit two artifacts. The first is a one-page executive summary that identifies inclusive collaborative classroom activities they plan on implementing in their classrooms. The second artifact is a personal diversity statement that reflects and includes the instructors' inclusive and collaborative classroom activities.

### **Module 3:**

The goal of Teaching with Transparency is to help students understand how and why they are learning course content in particular ways, and that when we make our pedagogy explicit, Underrepresented Minority and First-Generation Students experience more success. Participants will write a reflection essay on their experiences, specifically focusing on how they plan to consistently [implement a transparent assignment](#) design in the future based on what they learned in the process of making a transparent assignment.

### **Module 4:**

The National Institute for Learning Outcome Assessment (NILOA) Charrette Model is a peer-reviewed approach intended to help faculty design effective courses. Faculty can discuss their syllabi (in this case focusing on grading equity) and receive both oral and written feedback. The participants will break out in groups of three and utilize the charrettes process to inform how they can implement changes in their courses to promote equity. At the end of this module, academy participants will submit a one-page executive summary about the changes they're prepared to make vis-à-vis their grading/assessment policies based on what they've learned in module 4 and through the charrettes process.

### **Awarding of the micro-credential**

*Pending approval from the CEP*, faculty who complete the academy will be awarded the Kentucky Cultural Competency Credential as well as a WKU University-branded badge. The micro-credential badge can be displayed on faculty department webpages and organizational sites, and maybe used as professional development for continuance, tenure, and promotion documents.

**Budget**

The six Community of Practice fellows are compensated with a \$5,000 stipend each year for three years. Over the course of these three years the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning and the Office of the Provost will spend \$90,000 to launch and execute this program. In terms of human resources, two faculty developers and two instructional designers are assisting in the logistics associated with fellow-related workshop and the design of the online course for the academy.